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READ AND LET OTHERS READ

The Paradise

A PLACE OF NEVER-ENDING PLEASURES

In the Light of Quran & Sunnah

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

If you were to offer someone a hundred dollar note and tell him that currency notes worth billions are lying around somewhere just waiting to be taken, what do you think the person would do? He will not even bother to take the money he is being offered and immediately race off as fast as he can to get to where the billions are, so that he can take as much money as he can get his hands on. This is a perfect example of the way we should react when it comes to this world and the Hereafter.

The world we live in is simply an introduction to the next and a place where we get a sample of the pleasures and delights that Allah has placed for us in Paradise. It is similar to the way a part of something gives us a view of the whole of it, as does a drop of water help us to visualize the whole vast ocean. The difference, of course, is that, the pleasures of Paradise are far superior to their counterparts in this world and are eternal rather than fleeting.

A truly insightful person will recognize the world for what it is, and for him it will be like the hundred dollar note which failed to tempt him because what was to be gained elsewhere was far more inviting. Such a person will not give this world more importance than it deserves, and will make success in the Hereafter his life's goal. In contrast to this, someone who does not recognize the reality and fleeting nature of this world, will start thinking that this world is all what he has. He will be unable to recognize that the pleasures of this world are transient in nature and thus, merely a deception.

The flowers, moon, stars - in fact all the beautiful things that Allah has placed for us in this world are meant to remind us of the beauty and splendor that awaits us in Paradise; but unfortunately a person starts thinking of them as the ultimate delights and busies himself in trying to create a Paradise for himself in this very world. Intoxicated by the pleasures of this world, he not only loses sight of the fact that the joys and delights of this world exist to motivate him to strive for the Paradise of the Hereafter, but he actually forgets about the Hereafter.

Allah has divided our lives into 2 parts; a very small portion of our existence is in this world and the remaining portion has been placed in that eternal world which will come after our death. This world is meant to be a place where Allah wants us to strive and put in our utmost efforts and the Hereafter is the place where He will recompense us for our efforts. Whoever becomes involved in this world's pleasures and delights to the point of distraction will lose out in the Hereafter. When he arrives there and sees the eternal bounties, joys and pleasures, he will be filled with regret and remorse, cursing his own stupidity and short-sightedness for neglecting the Hereafter and being deprived of the real and lasting comforts. He will realize his mistake in being deceived by the transient pleasures of life in this world and for not recognizing the difference between real freedom and what was a mere illusion of freedom.

Paradise is Allah's favored place; a place of eternal happiness and joy, free of blemishes, discomforts, disturbance, pain grief, sorrow, sickness and tragedy. It represents total freedom from all kinds of anxieties.

Let us now proceed to find out about Paradise through studying the Quran and ahadith. But before we start it is important to understand that words are merely an attempt, albeit inadequate, to explain the reality of things and situations and they are only like maps rather than the terrain itself. For example, when we think of grapes and honey, our mind is restricted by what we have seen and tasted in this world. So how can we even visualize what they will be like in Paradise when their quality is infinitely superior; in fact there is no basis for comparison as they are like nothing known to the people of this world. In the case of Paradise, its delights surpass the imagination and defy description and it is only when we get there that we will realize the extent of its splendor and comforts.

The purpose of mentioning Paradise in the Quran and Sunnah is not to provide us with a complete picture , but rather, to simulate in us a desire for its luxuries, pleasures and joys. It is only when we ardently desire it, will we be ready to make sacrifices for it and strive to do all those virtuous deeds that are required from us in order to get there.

Paradise in the Light of the Quran

"But Allah will deliver them from the evil of that Day and will shed over them a light of beauty and a (blissful) joy. And because they were patient and constant He will reward them with a Garden and (garments of) silk. Reclining in the (Garden) on raised thrones they will see there neither the sun's (excessive heat) nor excessive cold. And the shades of the (Garden) will come low over them and the bunches (of fruit) there will hang low in humility. And amongst them will be passed round vessels of silver and goblets of crystal. Crystal-clear made of silver: they will determine the measure thereof (according to their wishes). And they will be given to drink there of a cup (of wine) mixed with Zanjabil. A fountain there called Salsabil. And round about them will (serve) youths of perpetual (freshness): if you see them you would think them scattered pearls. And when you look it is there you will see a bliss and a realm magnificent. Upon them will be green garments of fine silk and heavy brocade and they will be adorned with bracelets of silver; and their Lord will give to them to drink of a wine, pure and holy. Verily this is a reward for you and your endeavor is accepted and recognized." **(76:11-22)**

"As to the Righteous (they will be) in a position of Security, Among Gardens and Springs; Dressed in fine silk and in rich brocade they will face each other; So; and We shall Join them to Companions with beautiful, big and lustrous eyes. There can they call for every kind of fruit in peace and security; Nor will they there taste Death, except the first Death; and He will preserve them from the Penalty of the Blazing Fire. As a Bounty from Your Lord! That will be the supreme achievement!" **(44:51-57)**

"(Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised: in it are rivers of water incorruptible: rivers of milk of which the taste never changes; rivers of wine a joy to those who drink; and rivers of honey pure and clear. In it there are for them all kinds of fruits and Grace from their Lord. (Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?" **(47:15)**

"As to the righteous they will be in Gardens and in happiness. Enjoying the (bliss) which their Lord has bestowed on them and their Lord shall deliver them from the penalty of the Fire. (To them will be said:) "Eat and drink with profit and health because of your (good) deeds."They will recline (with ease) on thrones (of dignity) arranged in ranks; and We shall join them to companions with beautiful big and lustrous eyes. And those who believe and whose families follow them in Faith to them shall We join their families: nor shall We deprive them (of the fruit) of aught of their works: (Yet) is each individual in pledge for his deeds. And We shall bestow on them of fruit and meat anything they shall desire. They shall there exchange one with another a (loving) cup free of frivolity free of all taint of ill. Round about them will serve (devoted) to them youths (handsome) as pearls well-guarded." **(52:17-24)**

"Now no person knows what delights of the eye are kept hidden (in reserve) for them as a reward for their (good) deeds." **(32:17)**

Paradise in the Light of the Ahadith of the Prophet (SAW)

"He (Allah) said: 'They are those whom I choose. I establish their honour with My own hand and then set a seal over it (and they will be blessed with bounties) which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human mind has perceived.'" **(Muslim)**

"The first group (of people) who will enter Paradise will be (glittering) like the moon when it is full. They will not spit or blow their noses or relieve nature. Their utensils will be of gold and their combs of gold and silver; in their centers the aloe wood will be used, and their sweat will smell like musk." **(Bukhari)**

"There will be two Paradises of silver and all the utensils and whatever is therein (will be of silver); and two Paradises of gold, and its utensils and whatever therein (will be of gold)." **(Bukhari)**

"In Paradise there is a market to which they would come every Friday. The north wind will blow and would scatter fragrance on their faces and on their clothes and would add to their beauty and loveliness. Then they would go back to their family after having an added lustre to their beauty and loveliness, and their family would say to them: By Allah, you have been increased in beauty and loveliness after leaving us. They would say: By Allah, you have also increased in beauty and loveliness after us." **(Muslim)**

"If one of the women of Paradise looked at the earth, she would fill the whole space between them (the earth and the heaven) with light, and would fill whatever is in between them with perfume, and the veil of her face is better than the whole world and whatever is in it." **(Bukhari)**

"There would be an announcer (in Paradise) who would make this announcement: 'Verily! there is in store for you (everlasting) health and that you should never fall ill and that you live (for ever) and do not die at all. And that you would remain young and never grow old. And that you would always live in affluent circumstances and never become destitute', as words of Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, are: 'And it would be announced to them: This is the Paradise. You have been made to inherit it for what you used to do.'" **(Muslim)**

On being asked what Paradise was constructed of,the prophet (SAW) replied, "A brick of gold and a brick of silver with mortar of strong-scented musk; its pebbles are pearls and rubies and its soil is saffron. Those who enter it will be in affluent circumstances and will not be destitute, they will live for ever and not die, their garments will not wear out, and their youth will not pass away." **(Tirmidhi)**

"If as much of what is in Paradise as could be carried by a fingernail were to appear, the space between the cardinal points of the Heavens and the Earth would be adorned on account of it. If a man of the inhabitants of Paradise were to look down and his bracelets were to appear, his light would obliterate the light of the sun just as the sun obliterates the light of the stars." **(Tirmidhi)**

"In Paradise there is a river the banks of which are made of gold, its water flows over pearls and rubies, its soil is more scented than musk, its water is sweeter than honey and whiter than snow." **(Tirmidhi)**

Seeing Almighty Allah

After having countless blessings bestowed upon them in this world and even greater bounties in Paradise, people will be very eager to see their Benefactor. They will want to see the Generous Lord who not only created them and endowed them with so much, but also surrounded them with such breathtaking beauty in Nature. Without this, their contentment will not be complete and Allah, Gracious, as He is, will not disappoint those with whom He is well-pleased. Their joy when they will see their Great and Magnificent Creator defies description. The Prophet (SAW) said:

*"When those deserving of Paradise would enter Paradise, the Blessed and the Exalted would ask: 'Do you wish Me to give you anything more?' They would say: 'Have You not brightened our faces? Have You not made us enter Paradise and saved us from the Fire?' He (God) would lift the veil, and of things given to them nothing would be dearer to them than the sight of their Lord, the Mighty and the Glorious."***(Muslim)**

How to Attain Paradise

Reading about just some of the sights and splendors of Paradise not only stimulates in a person the desire to go there, but also makes him supplicate to Allah for it. However, just desiring Paradise is not enough; one has to perform virtuous deeds in this world to get there. Allah tells us in the Quran: *"Do men think that they will be left alone on saying "We believe" and that they will not be tested?"* **(29:2)**

And the Prophet (SAW) said: *"All my followers will enter Paradise except those who refuse." They said, "O Allah's Apostle! Who will refuse?" He said, "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me is the one who refuses (to enter it)."* **(Bukhari)**

So a prized place like Paradise cannot be attained without working for it in this world and only those fortunate souls who prove to be true devotees of Allah will be considered eligible for it. This means that it is not enough to select and practice merely a few Islamic teachings in one's life; a true believer is one for whom Islam becomes a complete way of life.

It is important to remind ourselves that the residents of Paradise will be people who have succeeded in the test which the life of this world represents. The freewill given to us in this world is not a reward but a means to get to Paradise through using it correctly. Those who of their own freewill obey Allah will be chosen for Paradise whilst those who use their freewill to adopt their own ways in disobedience to Allah's commands are transgressors and will have no share of the rewards in the Hereafter.

The price of Paradise is the sacrifice of the self; only a person who can do that will be able to attain it. Paradise is a very high place and ascending to lofty places takes a great deal of effort and sacrifices along the way. There are occasions in every person's life where Allah's religion requires some sacrifice to be made, be it the sacrifice of one's own desires and inclinations, ego, wealth and even sometimes of one's life. A person who can willingly give these up for Allah's sake will be the one deserving of His reward. A person who hesitates to make these sacrifices will unfortunately be deprived of His reward.

Paradise cannot be acquired by just desiring it; the people who will be worthy of it are the ones who guard themselves from all kinds of sins and corrupt practices, be it a corruption of ideology, character or actions. While a person himself only appreciates those of his servants who provide praiseworthy levels of service to him, when it comes to Allah, his own Master and Lord, he expects Him to treat both the virtuous people and the sinners alike and despite not obeying His commands, wants the best rewards in this world and the next. He expects that his Lord will bestow upon him in the Hereafter even greater comforts than what He has bestowed upon him in this world, despite the fact that all his life he has not obeyed Allah's commands, but in fact has spent his life being a slave to his own whims, desires and inclinations.

Every person who wants to meet his Lord in a state where His Lord is well-pleased with him and desires entry to His Lord's pleasures-filled Paradise has only way that he can adopt.: He should start off by studying the commands of Allah sent through the Quran and our Prophet's Sunnah as our beloved Prophet (SAW) is a role-model for us having demonstrated to us practically how the Quran can be translated into action in our lives. Armed with this knowledge, a person should start its implementation in his life. This is the only way to salvation and all other ways are nothing but misguidance.

Ignorant are those people who desire Paradise, but who have spoilt their own future by committing sins and do not realize the value of virtuous deeds. Allah tells us in the Quran:

"Allah has purchased of the believers their persons and their good; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise)" **(9:111)**

When you have sold your life and possessions to Allah, then what right do you have to them? Now they must be used according to the wishes and instructions of the Master and only then can Paradise be attained. Paradise is not for those who are unable to wake up for prayer despite hearing the Muezzin's call to prayer, nor for those who miss

their prayers due to being too engrossed in business. It is not for those, who despite knowing that zakah is obligatory make all kinds of excuses for not giving it, or who do not fast in Ramadan or are unwilling to spend their money and time to perform Hajj and die without performing this obligatory act of worship. Paradise is also not for those who run their business oblivious to the difference between permissible and prohibited ways of earning money or for those that think they are being very clever when they cheat people or those who are heedless of the Quran and Sunnah of our Prophet SAW). It is also not for those who oppress the weak, think business cannot be transacted without bribery or who misappropriate funds from the wealth of orphans or who do not distribute inheritance according to the Islamic law. Such people don't bother to perform voluntary acts of worship and are negligent in remembering Allah, yet still desire the highest ranks in Paradise. This is nothing but sheer folly! To deserve Paradise you have to control the whims and desires of the self and patiently bear the difficulties that are encountered in acting upon the commands of Shariah-Islamic law.

Allah's Messenger (SAW) said, *"The (Hell) Fire is surrounded by all kinds of desires and passions, while Paradise is surrounded by all kinds of disliked undesirable things."* **(Muslim)**

This means that a person who becomes a slave to his vain desires and self and is stopped by it from developing a strong relationship with Allah and becoming steadfast in his modes of worship will lose out in the Hereafter. If he does not refrain from satisfying his haraam (forbidden) desires and becomes oblivious to the difference between the permissible and the forbidden, his desires and inclinations will lead him to Hell.

The Prophet (SAW) said: *"A wise person is one who keeps a watch over his bodily desires and passions, and checks himself from that which is harmful and strives for that which will benefit him after death; and a foolish person is one who subordinates himself to his cravings and desires and expects from Allah the fulfillment of his futile desires."* **(Tirmidhi)**

Whoever is anxious to avoid going to Hell and is keen to enter Paradise will never prefer this world to the Hereafter. His life and wealth will never be dearer to him than Paradise. No matter how many virtuous deeds he does, he will consider then insufficient and will focus on performing his obligatory as well as voluntary acts of worship with diligence so that he may be rewarded with the highest ranks in Paradise.The prophet (SAW) said :

"I have seen nothing like Hell which is neglected by him who would flee from it, or like Paradise which is neglected by him who seeks it." **(Tirmidhi)**

There are so many people who do not get up for Fajr prayer, but for a small monetary gain they are prepared to stay up all night.

"The inhabitants of Paradise will not regret anything more than the moment that they spent in the world without remembering Allah." **(Tabarani)**

We have been given only a few years in this world to strive for an

unimaginable future ; otherwise on the Day of Judgment a person will be deprived of fabulous opportunities and great rewards simply because he did not make any effort for them in his worldly life.

It has been observed that in this world only those people achieve high status and levels of recognition who really work hard for their success. The Hereafter is similar to the world in this aspect; high ranks can only be achieved by those people who spend their time, energy and resources in pursuit of success in the Hereafter.

Allah tells us in the Quran:

"And for this let those aspire who have aspirations." **(83:26)**

LASTLY

By reading the description of Paradise in the Quran and Ahadith, one imagines an attractive, appealing and delightful place where there is nothing but peace, pleasure and enjoyment. Where life is eternal; it does not terminate with death and is free from the grief and anxieties that mar happiness.

When one compares this difficult wordly existence with a life where there is no concept of pain or adversity, merely imagining such a place where our agonies will come to an end forever makes one ardently desire to attain it.

It is a land where there are no wars and their accompanying terrors, no sickness, no anguish of unemployment. It is a place where people do not harbor any ill feelings for each other, nor deceive or doubt each other. They do not betray each other nor is there bloodshed on account of sectarianism or difference in race, religion or language. Paradise is a place where there is no fear of the future to give a person sleepless nights.

How beautiful will that place be, free from blemishes, pleasing and pleasurable, a place that is unparalleled in its splendor and its delights. Fortunate indeed is the person who will go there!

The special quality of the Hereafter is that it is eternal and it is very important to realize the significance of this. If one can be granted entry to such a splendid and magnificent place, a place which has a beginning but no end in exchange for being virtuous, patient, honest, trustworthy, dutiful, and obedient to Allah and His Prophet (SAW) in this relatively short and transient life, then it will indeed have been a profitable trade. How foolish and naive is the person who is lethargic or hesitant to make such a profitable deal or worse still, refuses to understand what a great bargain he is getting!

May Allah bestow on us the ability to chose and tread on the right path with constancy and steadfastness.

"O Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, we seek your good pleasure and your Paradise and ask you to protect us from the Fire". Ameen

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